

---

Spiritual Writings

Correspondence, Meditations, Advice

---

1991

**Letters: 1651**

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/ldm>

---

#### **Recommended Citation**

Letters: 1651.

<https://via.library.depaul.edu/ldm/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Correspondence, Meditations, Advice at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritual Writings by an authorized administrator of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact [digitalservices@depaul.edu](mailto:digitalservices@depaul.edu).

1651

July: *Visit of Monsieur Lambert to Nantes and Angers.*  
At the end of the year: *Death of Élisabeth Hellot.*

**L.297 - TO OUR VERY DEAR SISTERS CHARLOTTE ROYER<sup>1</sup> AND  
FRANÇOISE CARCIREUX<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor at Richelieu*

January 7, 1651

My very dear Sisters,

You have a right to complain about me because I have gone so long without thanking you for your beautiful altar cloth which has already adorned our chapel. I thank you for it with all my heart.

I believe that Monsieur Vincent has already sent you an answer in the matter you addressed to him. I am pleased that you saw Monsieur Lambert for that reason but you are keeping him a little too long. Extend my very humble greetings to him as well as my regrets. Tell him to please let me know if he delivered our letters to Sister Anne's<sup>3</sup> aunt and if he remembers Sister Vincente's<sup>4</sup> business.

Sister Charlotte, your father came to see us. He brought me your baptismal certificate which I am enclosing in this letter. I am certain that you will be pleased to have it. He is in good health as are your mother, your brothers, your sister-in-law and your niece, thank God. They do not have time to write. Your father told me that he will write to you. He sends greetings to both of you.

Enclosed is a letter for you, Sister Françoise, from Monsieur Carcireux. But do not worry. We have learned that he is not nearly so bad off as he would appear. Let us know if you had as many difficulties because of the floods as we did.

Perhaps I am wrong, my dear Sisters, but I believe that you are faithful in the observance of the Rule. This is my advice to you. All our sisters greet you very humbly. Sister Jeanne Delacroix<sup>5</sup> broke her leg but it is

1. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

2. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

3. Probably Anne de Gennes, a native of Richelieu, who would die in 1650. "Being of noble descent, she left all to offer herself to God in the Company of the Daughters of Charity" (Coste IX, 535).

4. Vincente Auchy, a native of Richelieu, see Letter 36.

5. Jeanne Delacroix, a native of Le Mans, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in approximately 1645. She was at first in Paris and then in Serqueux in 1648. In April

healing well and she is already beginning to get around, thank the good Lord.

Enclosed are the pictures of your saint-protectors and the virtue that Divine Providence has permitted to be selected for you. I urge you, my dear Sisters, to practice it well. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble servant.

### L.298 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[February 1651]

My Most Honored Father,

A judicial decision was handed down based on the proof of the abandonment of the child set forth in the transcript. I sent it to your Charity yesterday so that you could show it to the Ladies.

Now we need advice about how to carry out the decision because we are dealing with a powerful party. The easiest thing to do would be to have the horses seized on their way to the drinking-trough. I had thought, my Most Honored Father, if you did not find this acceptable, that we (I mean one of our sisters) should go to seek the advice of the Procurator General; or since similar situations may arise in the future, perhaps it would be better if Godefroy, one of the bailiffs of your jurisdiction, went and explained the entire matter.

We are in somewhat of a hurry to resolve this because the child's mother is with Sister Geneviève,<sup>1</sup> and we are afraid that she will slip away from us. Moreover, the father of the child might find in this a pretext to extricate himself from the situation which would put the poor creature in a deplorable state.

We also want the matter settled quickly because we are constantly worried about this poor girl. If you have no objections, I urge you most humbly to be good enough to speak to Monsieur Portail about this so as to have an accurate idea of her behavior.

We are sending for Sister Marie and the sister from Saint-Nicolas with whom she is now leaving. They will come to see you, accompanied by Sister Julienne,<sup>2</sup> on the day and at the time you indicate so that you may

<sup>1</sup> 1651, she was named Assistant. At the end of the year 1653, she returned to Serqueux. Once again Assistant in 1657, she was sent to Châteaudun in 1659 to replace Barbe Angiboust who had just died. Louise de Marillac said of her: "She is a daughter of virtue and great example" (Coste XIII, 672).

1. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.

2. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.

handle this matter for us more surely and charitably.

Please give me your blessing since I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and most grateful servant.

**L.299 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity at Saint-Denis*

February 17 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

Please take the belongings of Gilles du Pont which his master's son is to bring you and give him 18 pounds and 15 sols for the last quarter of his room and board. I shall surely repay you the first time you come here. Please get a receipt. I beg God to keep you, and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.282 - FOR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST<sup>1</sup>**

*(at Saint-Denis)*

(c. February 1651)<sup>2</sup>

My very dear Sister,

Yesterday I forgot to give you the 18 pounds and 15 sols. Please do not put off paying it. If you could send me a bushel of small, good, unbruised pears, I would be pleased.

As soon as Sister Jeanne arrives, please send Sister Nicolle here. I am planing to send you the money for the school teacher for the boys as well as for the pears. If possible, send about 50.

I beg Our Lord to let us enter the desert of penance with Him. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble . . .

---

1. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.

2. See Letter 299.

**L.300 - TO SISTER CHARLOTTE<sup>1</sup> AND SISTER FRANÇOISE<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor at Richelieu*

March 17, 1651

My very dear Sisters,

May Our Lord continue to grant you His holy graces and increase them constantly so that you may persevere in His love and service. Our good Sister Etienne<sup>3</sup> arrived safely, thank God, and appears to be animated by good will. Thank you for the beautiful thread you sent to me by her. She took good care of the supply of apples you gave her and they arrived here in perfect condition.

I beg you, my dear Sisters, to help poor Jeanne Fouré<sup>4</sup> to rid herself of the desire to return among us. Were she to persist in this idea for ten years, neither I nor my successors could take her back.

You are fortunate to have Monsieur Lambert.<sup>5</sup> Manage your household well so that you will not have to borrow. I think that the severity of the weather is the cause of the problems.

As for the desire<sup>6</sup> you have expressed, I consider it praiseworthy. It is not enough to begin well, one must persevere as, I believe, you intend. Nevertheless, in such matters, we must be submissive to the guidance of our Superiors who, for very important reasons, have determined that it is sufficient to make this offering for one year and to renew it annually. Do you not think, my dear Sisters, that this will be very pleasing to Our Lord since, having your freedom again at the end of the year, you can sacrifice it to Him anew? This is why, my dear Sisters, I advise you, if you are still in these good dispositions, not to put it off any longer so as not to lose any merit.

I am sure that you are still as modest and reserved as you were in Paris. Although you are living in a place where people are hospitable, cordial and love to be visited, I am certain that you do not act contrary to our holy customs. Also be very respectful toward ecclesiastics and modestly reserved with all men regardless of their station.

Monsieur Carcireux came here to see us yesterday. I tried to dissuade him from going to see you but I do not know if I convinced him. He

---

1. Charlotte Royer, of Liancourt, see Letter 254.

2. Françoise Carcireux, of Beauvais, see Letter 254.

3. Étienne<sup>3</sup>, perhaps Étienne<sup>3</sup> Massé, a native of Richelieu, had just entered the Company of Daughters of Charity.

4. Jeanne Fouré, see Letter 173b, regretted having left the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

5. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18.

6. The two sisters wished to make perpetual vows.

brought your sister who married and put her in service here in the city along with the child she had. We all have our share of difficulties!

As for Sister Charlotte's father, I haven't seen him since he brought her baptismal certificate and said that he would write to her when he got to Liancourt. I sent the baptismal certificate but I have not seen the letter.

We are all fairly well, thank God, except our good Sister Perrette<sup>1</sup> who was at Issy. She is with us now and always sickly as is our poor blind sister.<sup>2</sup> They ask your prayers as do all our sisters who send you cordial greetings. So do I who am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

### L.301 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

March 18 [1651]

My Most Honored Father,

Allow me to tell you that I believe that, in order to get some relief from the pain caused by your wound, you must have blood let from your arm on the same side. It need only be a small amount, a container<sup>3</sup> full, just enough to alleviate the inflammation that can result from the disturbance of fluids caused by purgations. However, it seems absolutely essential to me that you use no saline purgatives for several weeks.

I am sending you an ointment that I have found very effective in reducing inflammation and easing pain. I would like you to try it, Father. Rub it over the entire area of the wound. Cover it with a sort of compress—a piece of linen that has been folded three or four times, then dampened with water after it has been warmed on a few embers to prevent it from being too cold.

It must be changed at least twice a day. If the inflammation is bad enough to dry out the linen more quickly, then it should be dampened more frequently. Be careful not to let it stick to the wound and do not pull it off without first dampening it so as not to tear off the skin.

But, in the name of God, my Most Honored Father, do not wait until it has become dangerously infected to send for Monsieur Pimpernelle who cured my leg with an ointment that first produced a large scab and then healed it perfectly. Perhaps if you have a blood letting and use this little remedy for three or four days, you will not need anything else. I earnestly desire this.

---

1. Perrette, see Letter 214.

2. Nicole, who was blind, died in April 1652.

3. "La palette" is a type of dish which was used to collect the blood during bleeding.

With all my heart, I beseech your Charity to implore the mercy of God for my soul so that I may awaken from my torpor and serve God more faithfully and thus be able truly to call myself, my Most Honored Father, your most obedient daughter and most grateful servant.

**L.521 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

April 19 (1651)

Monsieur,

I consider the good you do our sisters despite your many cares and preoccupations to be a great benefit, and I praise God with all my heart for the blessings He bestows on the guidance of Monsieur Le Mercier<sup>1</sup> to whom I have not as yet expressed my gratitude except in my poor prayers.

I fear greatly, Monsieur, that our sisters may be questioned for all the reasons that your Charity was good enough to explain to me. However, if you and the most Reverend Bishop of Angers<sup>2</sup> consider it necessary and wish to do so, they are under his jurisdiction. I am certain, Monsieur, that either you will be charitable enough to instruct them yourself or you will have someone else do so, so that they may answer appropriately because I believe that they will be very intimidated.

Monsieur Vincent's heavy schedule and my own illness have prevented me from informing you of his views on the matter of Monsieur Ratier. I am sure that he will appreciate the efforts you are making to initiate the conferences.

I hope that in your charity you will remember our needs in your holy Masses and in your prayers. I beg you to do this for the love of God and in the belief that I am, Monsieur, in this same love, your most obedient and very humble servant.

- 
1. Monsieur Le Mercier, new confessor of the sisters of the hospital of Angers.
  2. In 1649, a new Bishop was named for Angers. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld was the brother of the famous Antoine Arnauld, the head of the French Jansenist party. Monseigneur Arnauld had a very great love for the poor and would often go visit them at the hospital. After the death of Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux, he would be subjected to the influence of his Jansenist family.

**L.302 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

April 24 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for your safe arrival and beseech Him to grant you the graces you need to profit from the guidance of Divine Providence in your life. I also ask His grace to enable you to reassure our good Sister Marguerite<sup>2</sup> that neither she nor the other sisters will have any difficulty in satisfying the Pastor. He took the trouble to come to see us this morning and I find him quite reasonable. He is a bit brusque. The only way to deal with him is by gentleness, by not arguing and by doing what he asks when you can. When you cannot carry out his request, you must explain your reasons to him gently and humbly. I am convinced that you will thus find him very easy to satisfy.

I think that you can easily go to confession to him or to one of his priests. However be prudent, my dear Sisters, because it is better not to go to them at all than to have to stop later.

I took some medicine yesterday so I will close now with the assurance that I am, most cordially, in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

- 
1. At the council of April 15, 1651 (Coste XIII, 678) it was decided to send Julienne Loret to Chars. Julienne, because of her prudence and intelligence would be able to act with proper judgment with the new Pastor, Monsieur Pouvot, who was a Jansenist.
  2. Marguerite Chétif, born in Paris, in the parish of Saint-Sulpice on December 8, 1621, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on May 1, 1649. She was sent to Chars, returned from there in May 1651 and left for Serqueux. Being in Paris on April 4, 1655, she made perpetual vows. She was present at the official establishment of the Company and signed the Act (August 8, 1655). In 1656, she was sent to Arras. She was there at the time of Louise de Marillac's death, and it was there that she heard of her appointment as Superioress General (Coste X, 740). In 1667, she was Directress of the Seminary, then in 1670, Sister Servant in Angers. In 1674, she was named Treasurer during the generalate of Nicole Haran. After her three-year term, she went to the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus Hospice as Sister Servant. She died at the Motherhouse at the stroke of midnight on January 9.



**L.303 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

May 2 [1651]

My Most Honored Father,

I continue to do everything so badly that I have come to the conclusion that I do not take sufficient time to seek from you the advice which we so greatly need. This causes me to ask you most humbly to have the charity to send for me or to come here at your earliest convenience.

Madame de Saint-Mandé<sup>1</sup> told some of our sisters that there would be a meeting today to settle some business concerning the foundlings. I most humbly beg you to see to it that the Ladies do not decide to send them all back to Bicêtre.<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that abundant experience from the past should prevent us, with your approval, from undertaking that course of action and I would prefer not having to refuse. The work appears to be going so well that I cannot help telling you, my Most Honored Father, that I am afraid that, if these Ladies start over again to take control of everything, they will hinder the guidance which God has given it since they have almost completely given up meddling with it.

On Friday, I sent a list of our needs to Madame de Mandé to pressure her for money. I did so reluctantly because of the fear that I just mentioned. I beg your Charity to consider before God how to prevent this from spoiling the work and to remember that I am, by order of His Providence, my Most Honored Father, your most grateful daughter and most obedient servant.

**L.345 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

May 19 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

One of our sisters<sup>3</sup> left last Tuesday for Hennebont. She will stop in Nantes and give you a letter which I wrote in a great hurry. She forgot to ask for her set of Hours. May I ask you to be good enough to give her this set? Please accept the three enclosed pictures which belonged to our dear deceased Sister Hellot.<sup>4</sup> One is for you, one for Sister Henriette<sup>5</sup> and one for Sister Marthe.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Madame de Saint-Mandé, see Letter 196.

2. The foundlings had been brought back to the Saint-Denis suburb (Coste IV, 170).

3. Monsieur Vincent had informed Anne Hardemont of the arrival of a sister (Barbe . . .) at the hospital of Hennebont (Coste IV, 172).

4. Élisabeth Hellot died at the end of the year 1650.

5. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

6. Marthe Dauteuil, see Letter 165.

I am worried because I have not had news of you for such a long time. Monsieur de Beaulieu<sup>1</sup> will give you news of us. He went to the trouble of visiting us a second time. I am afraid that you are ill because you gave him no answer on a rather important matter. If Monsieur d'Annemont<sup>2</sup> is in Nantes, I beg you, my dear Sister, to extend my most humble greetings and respect to him as well as to all your Ladies and to the administrators. I assume that if you thought it necessary for me to write to any one of them, you would let me know.

Please send me news of yourself more often, my dear Sister. I am afraid that you are not receiving all my letters because I write to you quite frequently.

Pray for us, my dear Sisters, that Our Lord Jesus Christ may bestow His Spirit upon us on this holy feast<sup>3</sup> so that we may be so filled with His Spirit that we may do nothing or say nothing except for His glory and His holy love in which I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

#### L.304 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

May 22 [1651]

My Most Honored Father,

I am troubled by my inability to express myself clearly when I spoke to you about our good Sister Julienne.<sup>4</sup> This was caused by the confusion of thoughts which my mind produces whenever I am obliged to tell you things that I believe you should know. I beg your Charity not to write to her in such a way that she would think that she must remain in a place where she has been for some time now since, in fact, you would perhaps not consider this appropriate.

I feel that I must tell your Charity that I was and still am sorry at having to abandon those little prayers because I believe that the Blessed Virgin wanted me to render her this small tribute of gratitude. But with her, I console myself by offering my renunciation to her and by resolving

---

1. Monsieur de Beaulieu, see Letter 210.

2. Monsieur d'Annemont, see Letter 173.

3. The Feast of Pentecost.

4. Julienne Loret was in Chars, see Letter 302.

to please her in some other way and to serve her with greater fervor. But how weakly are my resolutions carried out and how often they are neglected!

Help me by your charity, by giving me your blessing often and by offering me to God, unworthy though I am, as a good father does for his prodigal children because you know that I am one of them as well as, my Most Honored Father, your most obedient servant.

### L.305 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[May 1651]<sup>1</sup>

Please let me know, my Most Honored Father, if I may postpone my confession until tomorrow evening or, if it would perhaps even be better for your convenience, to wait until Thursday. Should I review the time prior to my last confession which was about three months ago?

So as to give you an account of how I spent today, let me tell you, my Most Honored Father, that, since I have been reading the *Memorial* of Grenada instead of *The Guide for Sinners*<sup>2</sup>, my mind has been oppressed by the punishment it depicts without, however, being apprehensive because I am too little permeated by the fear of God. Nevertheless, I seem to be immersed in some sort of generalized terror. This feeling abated somewhat when I meditated on sin after having read the first chapter of the *Guide*. I realized that I had misunderstood and the words "God is He Who is" filled me with peace even though I discovered within myself sins against His goodness. Should I continue this reading? Shall I wait for your directive about my confession, that is, about the preparation and the time for making it? I greatly need your charitable assistance for this as I do to be relieved of the products of my imagination which I believe are a frequent source of sin for me. I am ashamed to admit that I am so far from being, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and grateful servant.

P.S. I am afraid that I am being too insistent, but I am convinced that your charity will cause you to look upon me as a poor person.

---

1. Louise de Marillac made her annual retreat from Ascension to Pentecost.

2. Books written in Spanish by Louis de Granada and translated into French by N. Collin during the XVI century.

**L.429 - TO MY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT<sup>1</sup>**

*(at Hennebont)<sup>2</sup>*

(May 1651)

My very dear Sister,

In the name of God, I beg you, in your first conference, to reflect on the fact that there are three of you together and that you must honor the Blessed Trinity by this number. But how exactly? It is by the great union which must exist among you, by deferring to one another so as to avoid contention and by acquiescing, as far as possible, to one another's opinions. If occasionally they differ, remember, my dear Sisters, that Our Lord always deferred to the will of His Father. In that way, you will, as it were, honor this deference when, for love of Him, you sacrifice your opinion to follow that of the Sister Servant. She can act in like manner in matters in which neither God nor the neighbor will be offended.

I beg the goodness of Our Lord to dispose our souls for the reception of the Holy Spirit so that, burning with the fire of His holy love, you may be consumed in the perfection of this love which will enable you to love the most holy will of God in which I remain your . . .

**L.119 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE<sup>3</sup>**

Wednesday (May 1651)

My very dear Sister,

I beg you, without any delay, to have Sister Marguerite<sup>4</sup> leave Friday to come here. We have so few sisters and so many sick people that we need her. I am sending Sister Michelle<sup>5</sup> until we can send someone else to replace her. You realize that I do not have time to tell you more because I am making my little retreat. I ask for your prayers and I am in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

2. Anne Hardemont and Geneviève Doinel were going to welcome Barbe, a third Sister.

3. Julienne Loret in Chars, see Letters 220 and 302.

4. Marguerite Chétif, see Letter 302.

5. Michelle, probably a young sister, entrusted to Julienne Loret, the former Directress of the Seminary.

**L.304B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

May 26 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

Please let me know what has happened to the three syringes<sup>1</sup> from Liancourt. If we sent you any, please tell me what we sent, the price and by whom we sent them.

Also let me know if you have heard anything since the departure of Sister Marguerite.<sup>2</sup> She has not yet arrived. It is not yet noon.

Please keep me in your prayers for the remainder of my little retreat during which I shall not forget you because you know that I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.347 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER GUILLEMINES CHESNEAU<sup>3</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity at Saint-Étienne<sup>4</sup>*

June 1 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I am very surprised that you did not receive your share of the drugs we sent. To make up for this, I am sending you a loaf of sugar to make rose and cherry syrups. All our sisters ask to be remembered to you, and they praise God for the courage His goodness gives you to serve these poor afflicted people. Oh what a grace, my dear Sister, to have been chosen for this holy employment! It is true that it is extremely difficult, but it is because of this that the grace of God acting in you is more evident. You have every reason to trust in God and to abandon yourself to His Divine Providence. God will never fail to let you know how agreeable this manner of acting is to Him.

You did not mention Sister Jeanne.<sup>5</sup> This worries me. I urge you to let me know if you see one another<sup>6</sup> and whom you have to help you.

---

1. See Letters 526 and 306.

2. Marguerite Chétif, see Letter 302.

3. Guillemine Chesneau, see Letter 214b.

4. Saint-Étienne in Arnes, in the Ardennes. Four sisters were sent there in 1650.

5. Jeanne Françoise, see Letter 371.

6. The sisters served the poor in different villages (Coste XIII, 675).

You gave me great pleasure by writing to me. I am enclosing a letter dated, as you will see, quite long ago because I could not find a safe way to send it. I would like to receive news of you more often, my dear Sister, but since it is the service of God which prevents us from being in touch more frequently, blessed be His holy name! We must try to meet often in the presence of Our Lord, contemplating His practice of charity toward the neighbor.

Believe me cordially and affectionately in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.526 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS PERRETTE<sup>1</sup> AND MARGUERITE  
CHÉTIF<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughters of Charity and Servants of the Sick Poor at Serqueux*

June 2 (1651)

My very dear Sisters,

I am very concerned about the third syringe;<sup>3</sup> Marie-Marthe<sup>4</sup> can remember only the first two. Please try to recall what you gave the messenger shortly after Sister Jeanne Pangoy<sup>5</sup> returned. I do not know whether or not you were billed for the 25 sols for the spindles. I have not had time to have someone purchase the drugs you requested in your last letter. With the help of God, they will be in the first mail. Your scalpel has not yet been repaired so I am enclosing another one. I am not sending your habits because I do not know how long you will be there. I beg of you, watch over what Sister Michelle is doing so that she does not form any bad habits.

The first books we sent you cost 32 sols. Sister Marguerite<sup>6</sup> paid 20 sols for the last two we sent you. The two scalpels I mentioned must belong to the poor. The handles are with them. Here is a pound of salt for Sister Marie of Saint-Denis. If there is any left over, it is for the poor.

Please tell your parish priest that we are sorry that we cannot accept

---

1. Perrette Chefdeville, a native of Villers-sous-Leu, had a brother in the Priests of the Mission. She was Henriette Gesseume's niece. Her admission into the Company of the Daughters of Charity dates back to 1640-1641. During the first years, she served the poor in Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Fontenay, then she was sent to Serqueux. In 1653, she left for Châlons to aid the war victims.

2. Marguerite Chétif, see Letter 302.

3. See Letters 304b and 306 to Julienne Loret.

4. Marie-Marthe Trumeau was in Paris, see Letter 102.

5. Jeanne Pangoy, of Liancourt, came to Paris, no doubt for the retreat.

6. Marguerite from Vienne, see Letter 144.

that good girl. I am enclosing enough money to pay the wet-nurse until the end of the month. We have taken out the cost of the spindles and the books.

Good-bye for now, Sister. All the sisters send their greetings, as do I, to you and to our good Sister Michelle. I remain in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your . . .

**L.306 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Chars*

June 9 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I never received an answer to my last letter in which I asked you to let me know if you remembered what we sent to Liancourt<sup>1</sup> by the messenger from Clermont when you went looking for him, met him in the street, and gave him what you were carrying. Try to remember and let me know as soon as possible because I am upset about these syringes. I cannot locate the third one. Enclosed are the two books that we kept forgetting to send you.

Please pray for all of us. We felt the effects of your prayers in the preparation of our repository. It was very beautiful and we had begun only on Tuesday. God granted your prayers for this. I am in the love of Our Lord Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.306B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS CHARLOTTE<sup>2</sup> AND  
FRANÇOISE<sup>3</sup>**

*Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor at Richelieu*

June 9 (1651)

My very dear Sisters,

I am very happy to have had news of you because, although Sister

1. See Letters 347 and 526.

2. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

3. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

Charlotte is still bothered by her ailments, which she endures with her usual tranquillity, she must be in fairly good health since she keeps on working for the glory of God in the service of her neighbor. Continue to be faithful to God, my dear Sisters, and consider yourselves blessed to be far away from your birthplace. God wants you where you now are, my dear Sisters, so that you may work more generously to acquire the holiness He expects of you.

I believe that, before his departure, Monsieur Lambert<sup>1</sup> granted you the consolation you desired,<sup>2</sup> not for your entire life, but for one year only. This is because Monsieur Vincent grants permission only for this length of time to everyone, without exception. Moreover, this is more pleasing to God than would otherwise be the case because at the end of the year you will be free and can offer your will to Him anew.

I do not remember, my dear Sisters, if you asked my permission to write to your family. You may do so. If you mentioned anything else, write to me again because I no longer have your letter.

I am afraid that Monsieur Lambert left Richelieu without notifying you. If so, use this occasion to learn that we must be detached from everything.

Sister Françoise, your sister is in a pitiful state of poverty, but by the grace of God, she bears it peacefully. Pray for her and her three children. Your younger brother came to Paris to try to be admitted at the Incurables. If we can, we will help him to do so. Your father has returned to Beauvais. Beg our good God to grant him the graces he needs to make good use of all his trials. His family does all that it can for him. Everyone in Sister Charlotte's family is fine, thank God. I beg Him, with all my heart, to keep both of you steadfast in your desire to love Him faithfully and I remain in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. Please extend my very humble greetings to the Priests of the Mission and ask them to remember us in their Masses and prayers.

### L.307 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Monday Evening [June 1651]

I very humbly ask your Charity to be good enough to see if this letter can be sent to Montmirail.<sup>3</sup> Monsieur Georget and Mademoiselle

1. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18, visited the houses in Angers and Nantes before leaving for Poland.
2. To make or renew their vows.
3. The establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Montmirail took place in 1647.



Amaury<sup>1</sup> came here with a request to keep Sister Jeanne-Baptiste<sup>2</sup> for another four months. They seemed very dissatisfied with Sister Nicole<sup>3</sup> but they could not say why. Madame Fouquet<sup>4</sup> was present and I am sure she detected some rather strong feelings in the matter. I tried to speak to them with the respect I owe them, letting them know that the matter did not depend on me. I tried to explain to them what your Charity had instructed me to do about the parishes of Saint-Étienne and Saint-Roch.<sup>5</sup>

They seemed to think that you would not grant their request. I told them I did not know what your decision would be once they had explained in greater detail the urgent needs they thought they had because of the serious faults they believe they find in Sister Nicole. They said quite openly that she wants to leave the Company and that they were acting to keep her for us. They added several other things that have no foundation in reality.

Madame Fouquet must speak with you and give you the opinion of the Pastor who, as far as I can see, knows nothing except what these two persons have convinced him is necessary for their charity.

If you judge it appropriate to accord me the honor of seeing you so that I may explain the matter to you more fully, please be so good as to let me know. I am always, my Most Honored Father, your very humble...

- 
1. Monsieur Georget and Mademoiselle Amaury were from the parish of Saint-Jean-en-Grèves in Paris.
  2. Jeanne-Baptiste, the younger, see Letter 235, was at the parish of Saint-Jean before being sent to Montmirail. Monsieur Vincent, in his reply to Louise de Marillac (Coste IV, 213), was troubled about knowing who had really requested Jeanne-Baptiste: the people of Saint-Jean or a young man who wished to marry her? Jeanne-Baptiste, faithful to God's calling, stayed in Montmirail.
  3. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495, arrived in Montmirail in October 1650 (Coste IX, 531).
  4. Madame Fouquet, born Marie de Maupéou, was the mother of eight children. One of her sons would become the Minister of Finance, another the Bishop of Narbonne. One of her daughters would be Superioress of the Visitation in Toulouse. Madame Fouquet, a woman of great charity and eminent devotion, died at 91 years of age.
  5. Parishes of Paris.

**L.309 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER GUILLEMINES CHESNEAU<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor  
(at Saint-Étienne in Arnes)*

(June 1651)

My very dear Sister,

I see that you are still enduring many trials and I praise God for granting you the grace to bear them well. However, I beg you not to be disturbed by the person who wants to make you believe that you are acting as if you did not belong to the Company. It is true that the duty God, in His goodness, has entrusted to you is extremely trying and apparently devoid of consolation. Therefore, you must find comfort in the certainty that you are fulfilling the most holy will of God, and you will always do so as long as you remain in a spirit of submission. You have acted properly by waiting peacefully for God to deliver you from fear and danger. If He has not yet done so, bear this trial in a spirit of love and trust.

I cannot recall the money we gave you when you were leaving. Just count what remained after your trip and use it for the poor.

I am sure, my dear Sister, that your kind heart suffers from this lack of communication with the other sisters.<sup>2</sup> However, I am also certain that you are bearing this privation peacefully since Divine Providence has willed that you live like this for a while. Undoubtedly Saint John the Baptist, whose feast is celebrated Saturday, would very much have liked to follow Our Lord and to have the joy of always being with Him, but he preferred to renounce this consolation and to carry out the task assigned to him for the glory of God and the service of the neighbor. This example is a great comfort for isolated souls. Reflect upon it from time to time, my dear Sister, I beg of you. Rereading your dear letter, I realize that God has granted you many graces. Be very grateful for them and continue to turn to Him in all your needs.

Please continue to pray for Monsieur Vincent. He seems to be as well as usual. Monsieur Portail is also fine. I will be certain to deliver your message when I have the honor of seeing them. If you see or write to our sisters in your area, please remember us to them. Two of our new sisters are sick: Sister Françoise Paule<sup>3</sup> and Sister Phénix<sup>4</sup> who is seriously ill. Please pray for them and for me who am in greater need of prayers to

1. Guillemine Chesneau, see Letter 214b.

2. See Letter 347.

3. Françoise Paule was going to recover. She was at the Motherhouse in 1657.

4. Phénix, who had entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in approximately May of 1650, died at the end of June 1651.

obtain the mercy of God in whose love I remain, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I do not know whether or not you received the sugar loaf we sent you from the Ladies to make up for the loss of the preserves we had sent.

P.P.S. Since I wrote this letter, I have learned that you did receive the sugar loaf. Please remember me most affectionately to my very dear Sister Marie-Joseph.<sup>1</sup>

### L.311 - TO SISTER JULIENNE LORET<sup>2</sup>

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

June 30 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I thank you with all my heart for your loving concern. The remedies I took were only precautionary, thanks be to God. However, in His goodness, He has visited us again. He took from us our dear Sister Phénix<sup>3</sup> who died of a raging fever on the ninth. This gives us great reason to humble ourselves and to renew the confidence we must have in Divine Providence. We still have Sister Madeleine<sup>4</sup> from Saint-Nicolas-du-Char-donnet who is near death.

I praise God for the better health He has given to Sister Michelle,<sup>5</sup> and I beg her to use it well in the service of her neighbor and to strive to form herself according to the maxims of a true Daughter of Charity. Please have her give an account of her meditations and of the manner in which she puts her resolutions into practice as well as the faults she commits against them. Show her great cordiality when she admits these. See to it, I beg of you, that she does not develop the habit, when she is out, of committing faults against the modesty and reserve she should manifest. Above all, tell her to let you know privately if you give her cause to be displeased with you and impress on her the importance of not discussing with outsiders what goes on between you. You may read this letter to her, if you think she needs to hear it.

I am sorry you have to put up with this annoyance, but I urge you to ask the Pastor to be good enough to put a private lock on your door.

---

1. Marie-Joseph would be in Étampes in 1653. In June 1658, Monsieur Vincent spoke of her death with admiration (Coste X, 510).

2. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.

3. Phénix, see Letter 309.

4. Madeleine Espérance, see Letter 317.

5. Michelle, see Letter 119.

Assure him that it is not because you distrust the assistant but because propriety requires it. Greet him most humbly for me. All our sisters ask to be remembered most affectionately to you.

Good-bye for now, my very dear Sisters. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Enclosed is the statement you requested.

**L.313 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE AGNÈS<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor  
at the Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Jean at Angers*

July 1 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for the consolation you received from Monsieur Lambert's<sup>2</sup> visit. He was so edified by all our dear sisters that I almost wish I were in Angers. This gives me great joy, my dear Sister, and reason to glorify God. Continue, I beg of you, my very dear Sisters.

Monsieur Lambert does not remember having said that three of you were to be recalled. On the contrary, he is convinced that you are all firmly established. However, he is worried that our sisters are overworked and in delicate health. I beg you, my dear Sisters, to get some relief from the women and girls who have been cured because I think that your administrators would want this.

Please remember me most humbly to them and to the Ladies I know. When you see Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux and Monsieur Ratier, assure them of my very humble gratitude and services. We are all deeply obligated to them. I do not write to them as often as I would wish since I know that this could be bothersome for them because they are both so very busy for the glory of God. Monsieur Lambert spoke so highly of the Bishop of Angers<sup>3</sup> that I feel that you are blessed to be under his jurisdiction. I urge you to be very grateful for this.

I recommend the soul of our dear Sister Phénix<sup>4</sup> to your prayers. She was buried last Tuesday. She was someone for whom we had high hopes. Other sisters are ill, particularly our good Sister Anne Hardemont<sup>5</sup> and

---

1. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

2. Monsieur Lambert indicated to Louise de Marillac, in his letter of May 23, 1651, that all of the sisters, except Nicole, were sick.

3. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld, see Letter 521.

4. Phénix, see Letter 309.

5. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

one of her companions in Lower Brittany.<sup>1</sup> Pray for all of them, my dear Sisters. Believe me in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and very loving servant.

P.S. Greet your confessor very humbly for me. I will have the honor of writing to thank him for his charity in your regard.

My heart was deeply touched by your submission when I reread your letter.

Please tell all our sisters that I beg God to forgive them for wanting to be recalled. However, I am convinced that they would not want to consider such a thing except in response to the call of obedience.

**L.314 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor  
at the Hôtel-Dieu of Nantes in Brittany*

July 1 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

Your last letter was a great consolation for me because I had long hoped to have news of you. I had written at least three times without receiving any response. I was afraid you were ill. I praise God with all my heart that such was not the case.

What can I say, my very dear Sister, to convince you that it was not because of a lack of desire that I did not give you the satisfaction you said you expected of me. I must confess that I forgot because that is the only reason for my failure. Even now I cannot recall anything I was supposed to tell you because I believe that Monsieur Vincent always answers your questions. Moreover, as soon as I see in your letters that you want some advice from him, I make it a point to remind him through the brother who serves as his secretary. I am sure you explained the whole matter fully to Monsieur Lambert<sup>3</sup> who represents Monsieur Vincent to you. He will not fail to do whatever is necessary about the needs he discovered.

Remain at peace, my dear Sister, and work as you always have to settle things. The trouble you have gone to until now will not be wasted. You know that sunshine follows the rain.

I have already told you, my dear Sister, that, thinking I had a safe way to write to you, I gave the messages to your uncle, Monsieur Le Duc.

---

1. Barbe arrived in Hennebont in May 1651.

2. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

3. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18, had just made the visitation.

Also, your cousin sent me a little package to keep for you: five or six chaplets of Our Lord and a rosary. Let me know if you want me to send it by the messenger.

Tell all our dear Sisters that I greet them with all my heart and that I beg God to grant them the grace of becoming what His heart wants them to be. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

### L.315 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

July 5, 1651

My Most Honored Father,

The manner in which Divine Providence has always willed that I speak to you causes me to turn to you very simply in this matter concerning the accomplishment of the holy will of God and the obstacles which experience has shown might hinder the firm establishment of the Daughters of Charity. This supposes that God does not reveal that He wishes to destroy the Company entirely because of the general and individual faults which appear more pronounced in it in recent years. Before God, I believe that if I am not the sole cause of this I am at least the principal one, miserable creature that I am, because of my bad example, negligence and lack of zeal in the performance of my duty. Therefore, one of the Company's most urgent needs is to look to the future and provide someone now who can give better example.

A second need is that their way of life be put down in writing and distributed wherever there are sisters who can read. They should keep it reverently, without showing it to lay people or giving them copies. To be sure that every member of the Company is well acquainted with it, it could be read in Paris once a month by the Sister Servant. The sisters of the parishes would assemble there for that purpose every two weeks, part of them at one time and part two weeks later.

As for the sisters living in the country in places where it is not considered appropriate to send copies, either because they cannot read well enough or because we are not too sure of them, they could listen to the reading of it during the visitation or when they come to this House.

Since there will always be persons with minimal instruction in the Company and because practice leads to a way of acting, each article must be followed by an explanation of the intention with which it is to be carried out.

It would seem that weak and flighty personalities need to see a solid

foundation in order to find in it help to overcome temptations against their vocation.

The basis for this establishment, without which it would appear impossible for the said Company to subsist or for God to derive from it the glory which He seems to want it to render to Him, is that it must be erected either with the title of Company or of Confraternity and must be entirely under the jurisdiction of and dependent upon the venerable guidance of the Most Honored Superior General of the Venerable Priests of the Missions, with the consent of their Company, so that, in association with them, it might share in the good they accomplish so that the divine goodness, through the merits of Jesus Christ and the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, might grant our Company the grace to live in the same spirit with which His goodness animates their honorable Company.

These are the thoughts, my Most Honored Father, that I dared not conceal from you. I leave them entirely to the decision which God wills your Charity to make concerning them. God, in His goodness, has granted me the grace to act in this way for 26 years since that day on which, in His mercy, He placed me under your holy guidance to accomplish His most holy will. Thus He made me what He knows I must be all of my life, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and most grateful servant.

**L.316 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE<sup>1</sup>**

July 15 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I am astonished not to have received a letter from you. Because of this, I am worried that you may be sick or upset about some contradiction. I would be distressed if I thought that I were in any way the cause of such a state of affairs. If I have failed to answer you or to give you some satisfaction you expected from me, please lay the blame on my memory which is failing quite a bit and not on my affection or on my willingness to grant you every satisfaction I can. My dear Sister, if you only knew the difficulties we are experiencing: the number of sick sisters and the many little matters for which we cannot get any help, you would feel sorry for us. You would pity us even more if you realized that my sins are the cause of all these trials. In the name of God, my dear Sister, pray the divine goodness to have mercy on me.

---

1. Jeanne Lepintre in Nantes, see Letter 64.

Let me know if you received a letter in which I told you that I had a letter and a few little chaplets that your cousin Le Duc is sending you. I am waiting for a safe way to send them. I have been assured that there will be one.

I was very happy to learn through Sister Louise's<sup>1</sup> letter that calm has followed the storm. It is not that I am not well aware that you still have sufficient occasions to practice virtue, but Our Lord is your strength and your consolation and His example is a source of encouragement for you. I beg this of Him with all my heart and I beg you to believe me in His holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. Please have Sister Louise take some sugar water until Monsieur Vincent decides what is to be done.

**L.317 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

July 21 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

We are in such a hurry that I only have time to thank you cordially for the dear proofs of affection you gave us. I do not think that I have anything to say to you except that, since you have not spoken to the Pastor about the key, it is just as well to leave things as they are.

As for what is said to you about those who preceded you, I do not believe that you should be upset about it, my dear Sister. Answer as well as you can without laying any blame on them. Let us try to bear the contradictions and repugnances that we meet in carrying out our duty because this will make our actions more pleasing to God. I am sure our sisters procured help because Sister Marie was very ill for a long time. Besides they had farm animals which gave them extra work. I am not saying that she was not seriously at fault on account of the freedom the deceased Pastor allowed all our sisters because he esteemed them so highly, but we all commit faults.

Our good God is still visiting the dear Company with afflictions in the form of sickness and death. Our dear Sister Espérance<sup>2</sup> was buried Wednesday evening at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. At present Sister Jeanne Delacroix,<sup>3</sup> Sister Marguerite<sup>4</sup> from Vienne and Sister Jeanne from

1. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

2. Madeleine Espérance, of the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, died in July 1651.

3. Jeanne Delacroix, see Letter 297.

4. Marguerite of Vienne, see Letter 144.



Sedan are ill here. Pray for all of us and beg God to have mercy on us. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. All our sisters send their regards to you. Together with them please remember me to Sister Michelle.<sup>1</sup>

**L.318 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

July 26 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

This is the third or fourth letter I have written to you without receiving any response. This causes me to worry about you. I beg you, my good Sister, to reassure me about your health and that I have not given you any reason to be upset with me because, if this is the case, I can assure you, my dear Sister, that I certainly did not intend to do so.

I received a letter from Sister Louise<sup>2</sup> telling me about her ailments. We so seldom have the honor of speaking with Monsieur Vincent that I have not as yet found out what we will do about this matter. But please assure her, my dear Sister, that we will do all in our power to relieve her.

I am astonished that we have not received any letters from the other sisters. If possible, I would like to hear from Sister Henriette<sup>3</sup> how things are in her duty.

Sister Louise wrote that you are enjoying peace and quiet and I was deeply consoled. Not that I do not realize, my dear Sister, that the pathways of God are strewn with roses and thorns. However, it seems to me that you have suffered so much that I am comforted to know that you have a breathing space to enjoy the sweetness and consolation which come from serving the poor without having to be concerned about other things. It would appear that this peace is leading to great unity and cordiality among you. I sincerely hope for this from the goodness of God. I beg you with all the affection of my heart to believe me to be, more than ever, in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Please pray for our deceased Sisters Phénix<sup>4</sup> and Espérance<sup>5</sup> who died recently.

---

1. Michelle, see Letter 119.

2. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

3. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

4. Phénix, see Letter 309.

5. Madeleine Espérance, see Letter 317.

**L.469 - (TO SISTER JULIENNE LORET AT CHARS)<sup>1</sup>**

(c. 1651)

My dear Sister,

It is not appropriate for you to have started ringing your bell. I did not know that you were the one who was supposed to ring the bell for Mass. Monsieur Vincent says that the person who rings the bell must be authorized to do so by the Church. Try to discontinue this little by little. I beg you, Sister, to keep in mind that we must not undertake anything without first proposing it to our superiors. This happens imperceptibly yet it has very serious consequences.

**L.326 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

(c. August 1651)

My very dear Sister,

Your last two letters received my very close attention. I thought that Monsieur Lambert<sup>2</sup> could shed some light on the matter about which you say you are unable to speak to me. However, he has no recollection of it. This causes me to beg you, my dear Sister, to write to me more openly. I always receive your letters, and if you have Monsieur d'Annemont with you,<sup>3</sup> it will be even easier for you to send them.

I beg God to grant some relief to our Sisters Marthe<sup>4</sup> and Louise.<sup>5</sup> I think that it would be wise, my dear Sister, for them to abandon the idea of making a pilgrimage.

I am distressed, my dear Sister, that you have not made a retreat since you have been in Nantes. Monsieur Vincent, to whom I showed your

---

1. Letter from the Julianne Loret series, recopied by Marguerite Chétif.

2. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18, made the visitation in June.

3. Monsieur d'Annemont, see Letter 173.

4. Marthe Dauteuil, see Letter 165.

5. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

letter, says that you must take the time to do so. I will tell you what I did, shortly before Pentecost, with the advice of our Most Honored Father. He had me take five or six days for retreat after I had made arrangements to have important matters taken care of during this period and had turned the day to day running of things over to Sister Assistant. This does not mean that when a need arose I did not take time to discuss what was going on. I assure you, my dear Sister, that God made up for what was lacking in me. He does the same for everyone. He even does more for others than for me because I am always too little disposed to receive His graces.

All that remains is for you to resolve to take the time. You may be certain that no one will find fault with your decision. You can place Sister Henriette<sup>1</sup> in charge of the other sisters unless Monsieur Vincent has told either of you something that would be an obstacle to this. Perhaps the trust you will place in her will help to calm her down. If you do not think this would be appropriate, select someone else.

Please extend my very humble greetings to Monsieur d'Annemont and greet all our very dear sisters cordially for me. I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Please pray and have all our dear sisters pray for our Most Honored Father's well-being.

### **L.321 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

August 14 (1651)

Monsieur,

It would have pleased me very much to be of service to the good young lady whom your Charity sent to me, but she was already in the very able hands of Mother Marie Constance whom I had the honor of meeting. She directed her to the Pastor of Saint-Sulpice who took complete charge of everything, which leads me to believe that she will soon be placed.

Monsieur Lambert made me ashamed that I had taken the liberty of expressing my displeasure to you. I assure you that I felt so sorry for that poor girl that if I could have proven her innocent of the evil of which she was accused, I would have done so at any cost. Finally, Monsieur, because her father, according to her, was too long in coming she left us and found work as a domestic in Paris. Believe me, Monsieur, among the sorrows that God has permitted us to suffer, none has been more painful

---

1. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

for me, other than that which touches the glory of God, than that of knowing the trouble you have gone to and the acts of charity you have performed for us in vain because of our faults and miseries. Since, in His holy love, our good God has revealed the needs of this little Company to you, I hope that by this same love He will cause you to continue to respond to them.

I most humbly beg this of you, Monsieur, and I beseech you to be so charitable as to ask our good God to grant me new graces to accomplish His most holy will, in which I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble daughter and servant.

**L.324 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

September 1 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I thought that I had told you very clearly that Monsieur Vincent had said that you were to discontinue the practice of ringing the bell for your exercises, for many reasons which are too lengthy to spell out here. Moreover, this is not necessary, especially for you, because you know what obedience is. His Charity told me that you could give some pretext or other to excuse yourself from doing this other than the fact that it is not the custom anywhere that our sisters are established (you know how important it is not to introduce innovations into a community). But you have a very real reason for stopping this practice, and this is the thought of Monsieur Vincent namely, that if you are not the one to do so, since you may not be there for a long time, it will of necessity be other sisters who will discontinue it because there is a hospital for the sick nearby. Moreover, in the villages it is impossible for two sisters to be together for their exercises, and it is also very difficult for even one always to be there at the appointed time. Since this is the case, please reflect on the fact that the sister ringing the bell is summoning no one. Would this not be proclaiming your action to the world when Our Lord teaches us to pray in secret when only our personal interests are involved?

Thank you, my very dear Sister, for the good fruit. However, since you have promised to send us more, I would ask you to put straw around the basket and even between the pieces of fruit because your first supply arrived bruised. You did not say if it was you who had made the cake. If so, you are an excellent cook. Our sick sisters would thank you for it and for the fruit if they could write.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to join us in thanking God for the grace He granted us is restoring Monsieur Vincent to health. He has been very ill with a constant fever. Please continue to pray for his complete cure because this year people seem to relapse into this fever several times.

I beg God in His goodness to increase His graces to you, and to give Sister Geneviève a great desire to attain perfection. I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.322 - TO SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

(September 1651)

My very dear Sister,

I had thought of sending one of our sisters to you today to help you, but because almost all of them are ill I was afraid that you would have a sick sister with you. Besides, what you told me about the woman staying with you leads me to believe that you do not need immediate assistance. But, if you remain hard pressed we will, with the help of God, see to it that you get relief. I beg Him to keep you and to continue to grant you His holy graces. In the love of Jesus Crucified I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.327 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

September 19, 1651

My very dear Sister,

I beg you, in the name of God, not to be afflicted by the trials which His goodness sends you. This is an occasion for you to prove more clearly than ever your fidelity to Him. I am well aware that it is very difficult for you not to be able to serve the poor in the way you would desire. You must abandon yourself to the care of Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Father of the Poor.

I am sending you one of our sisters who will be a great help and consolation to you. If she does not know how to let blood, you can teach her very quickly.

The Pastor asked for some emetic wine, which we are sending. The usual dose is three ounces, but if our dear sister is very weak, I think that two would suffice.

Please remember, my dear Sister, that the more we are deprived of human assistance and consolation, the more our souls are filled with divine consolation if we trust in God and abandon ourselves to Him, as I am sure you have and continue to do each day. I praise God for this with all my heart, and I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.328 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE<sup>1</sup>**

September 22 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I am most anxious to have detailed, frank news of you. I thought that Monsieur Lambert could enlighten me about what you said he might know, but he told me that he remembers nothing. It must therefore be, my dear Sister, that God wants this entire episode of the past to be forgotten. All that remains for us is to make good use of the present, but, in order to do so, we must ask this grace of God.

Please let me know if you have news of our sisters of Hennebont. We are worried for we have heard nothing from them since we learned that Sister Anne<sup>2</sup> was not feeling well. We have not yet been able to give the order to change our dear Sister Louise<sup>3</sup> because we have only sick and infirm sisters here at the House. There are so many sick in Paris that it seems as if we are all going to die. This scourge comes from our good God who touches us in order to warn us that we must be converted. Pray to Him that in His goodness He may have mercy on me. Please pray for my son who has been very ill for more than a week.

Your relatives are well, thank God. Your cousin, who had thought of entering the Company, has gotten married. Sister Louise's mother, sister and nephew are fine, and so are all Sister Henriette's<sup>4</sup> relatives. Sister Perrette<sup>5</sup> is also well. She is a very good sister. I have never seen such obedience, or at least none greater than hers.

I think I mentioned Monsieur Vincent's illness. However, considering

---

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

3. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

4. Henriette Gessemaume, see Letter 76.

5. Perrette Chefdeville, see Letter 526.

his age and multiplicity of responsibilities, he is, by the grace of God, fairly well now. Please recommend him often to the prayers of our very dear sisters who, I hope, are strong in their love of God and in the practice of interior mortification. It is only reasonable that those whom God has called to follow His Son should strive to become holy as He is holy and to make their lives a continuation of His. What a blessing that will be for all Eternity! The merits of Jesus Crucified have earned this grace for us. I remain in His love, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. My apologies for not having written to our sisters, particularly to Sisters Henriette and Marthe,<sup>1</sup> whom I cordially embrace as I do all the others. Please extend my very humble greetings to all the good women and young ladies whom I continue to esteem most highly.

**L.285 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

(1651)

Monsieur,

I have deprived myself for sometime of the honor of writing to you for fear that I might appear importunate and distract you from your holy occupations. But necessity pushes me to do so. First of all, I wish to express my gratitude for the constant charity you show our dear sisters. We are extremely grateful to you for this. Secondly, I beg you most humbly to be good enough to let me know if you believe that it is essential to recall Sister Marguerite Moreau.<sup>2</sup> I ask this because it seems to me, Monsieur, that to leave her as Sister Servant in her present dispositions, in which she is unable either to overcome herself or to obey, would be a bad way to begin the direction of the house, and this would cause me to worry about the outcome. Please let me know also if your Charity judges it necessary to recall any of the other sisters. Please do not base this on any desire they might have expressed, because the frailty of these sisters would cause all of them to say that they had to be recalled, but rather, on the conclusion reached by you and Monsieur Ratier. Perhaps this will give the administrators<sup>3</sup> the idea of asking for more sisters. This question

1. Marthe Dauteuil, see Letter 165.

2. Marguerite Moreau, see Letter 278. Monsieur Lambert indicated, in his account given of the visit, "There would be some reason to find fault with the relationship between Sisters Marguerite and Cécile (Angiboust)."

3. The Fathers of the Poor, the administrators.

has been discussed for a long time, but I do not believe that the idea is coming from our sisters.

I am astonished by all that our sisters tell me about the Reverend Bishop of Angers<sup>1</sup> because, although I have long been aware of his virtue, I did not realize the extent to which he practiced it in the service of the poor. May God be forever blessed for the graces He grants to those who fear and love Him, and may He make me worthy truly to say that I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient servant and very humble daughter.

**L.329 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

September 27 (1651)

Monsieur,

I was extremely surprised when Sister Jeanne Lepintre<sup>2</sup> informed me that she was in Angers. This causes me to fear that she went through a severe spiritual crisis in Nantes. I am all the more convinced of this because she wrote to me two or three times in such veiled terms that I suspected something. If she has returned to Nantes, she has found a letter from me in which I assured her that I was suffering because of the trial I felt she was undergoing. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, in your charity, to let us know if we can do something to relieve her, as well as what you have learned about the entire situation in Nantes relative to our sisters.

The administrators of our hospital have finally decided to ask for three more sisters. However, they did not mention how they proposed to defray the cost of the journey. This is not the only reason, Monsieur, that we cannot send them at this time. There is also the fact that there are so many sick persons everywhere who have required the services of all those sisters whom we had available to send promptly to Angers. I cannot tell you how distressed I am because of this, and also because I cannot promise you any sisters soon for Château-Gontier. I shall not fail, Monsieur, to discuss this whole matter with Monsieur Vincent as soon as God grants me the grace of seeing him.

As for the suggestion of giving a Daughter for the convent which wants a sister, we cannot do that. I would ask you most humbly, Monsieur, to

---

1. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld, see Letter 521.

2. Jeanne Lepintre, Sister Servant of the Hospital of Nantes.



explain this to those good religious. Allow me, Monsieur, to ask you to remember my son, who is very ill, in your holy Masses and prayers. I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

P.S. I forgot to tell you, Monsieur, that I suggested the change<sup>1</sup> you agreed upon to Monsieur Vincent. He thinks that we must decide to put it into effect.

### L.334 - TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT<sup>2</sup>

*at Nantes*

(c. October 1651)

My very dear Sister,

Is it possible that you did not receive the long letter I wrote to you shortly after your arrival in Nantes in which I explained to you the way I thought you should act with our sisters since you had never before been in such a situation?<sup>3</sup> It is true, my dear Sister, that I realize that I have not written to you since. I apologize because I have received two letters from you. I assure you that I do not have time to do all that I should because of my ailments and lethargy. I beg you to ask pardon of God for me, and do not think that I am upset with you.

You must have had a great deal of trouble to have reached this point. I hope that you will profit from the experience. I am sure, my very dear Sister, that you agree with me when I say how blessed you are to have only to obey. You have many opportunities to practice gentleness, submission and renunciation of your own will, if you are still attached to it. Look upon this as a precious time, I beg of you, because I am sure that you will find great consolation in it when it has passed.

Remember me to Sister Henriette,<sup>4</sup> and tell her jokingly that I believe that only the trip to Madagascar could upset her. Oh, what a blessed journey, my dear Sister! I think it must be 1,000 to 1,200 leagues from here.

All our sisters send their cordial greetings, especially those to whom you have written or sent regards. Time is so precious to them, and they are so little educated that they cannot answer you, at least not immedi-

---

1. The replacement of Marguerite Moreau, see preceding letter, Letter 285.

2. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110, of Hennebont returned to Nantes.

3. Anne Hardemont was still Sister Servant.

4. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76. Monsieur Vincent asked her to go to Hennebont as Sister Servant (Coste IV, 240).

ately. You must accept their good will for now. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. My regards to all our sisters. I beg God to grant all of you the grace of remaining faithful to the grace He gave you during the Jubilee.

**L.354 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

October 6 (1651)

My dear Sister,

I thank God for all the help His goodness gave our deceased sister. I believe that, in a short time, she worked diligently to acquire the degree of holiness to which God had called her. You are blessed to have been able to assist her. May Our Lord be your eternal recompense!

Now I beg you to slow down a bit and to look after your health. For this, I think that you need exercise. If we are to believe Sister Philippe,<sup>2</sup> she would willingly undertake anything without taking time out to be sick. This is why I beg you, my dear Sister, to take turns teaching school, looking after the house and nursing the sick in the villages. Our sisters do this everywhere else. One of my worries about Chars is that our sisters are not in the habit of looking for opportunities to serve the sick poor of the surrounding villages. This causes me to fear that our stay there will lead to our humiliation.

I thank you with all my heart for the beautiful, delicious apples you sent us. It seems to me that you once mentioned that you were going to make honey. Please find out if that white honey is natural, or if it can be made some way because sugar is becoming very expensive, and it could be used to make syrups and even preserves.

We are sending you a half-pound of catholicon, a pound of senna, a pound of cassia and two and a quarter pounds of licorice. If you need anything else, let me know. Sister Marguerite<sup>3</sup> will draw up an account of what you are to pay the nurses. Please let us know how the child is doing. Be sure that he is brought back to us at the time indicated. I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.

2. Philippe Bailly, see Letter 339.

3. Marguerite of Vienne at the Motherhouse, see Letter 144.

P.S. Thank you for your kindness toward my son. He is better, thank God. Help me to thank Him for this.

L.330 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

*at Angers*

October 24 (1651)

Monsieur,

I think that Sister Jeanne Lepintre<sup>1</sup> must have found the renewed strength she needed during her little trip. I thank you most humbly Monsieur, for your charity to both of us. I would be most grateful to you if you would be so kind as to let us know Sister Jeanne's attitude concerning the possibility of a longer stay in Nantes, or if you believe she needs a change and should come to Paris for a while. Some time ago she expressed the wish to come here, but lately I fear that she does not speak to me with the same openness. I am afraid that she is offended by something, but I know no reason for it.

I spoke to Monsieur Vincent about Sister Marguerite Moreau.<sup>2</sup> He agrees that we should have her come here because she has spent very little time in this House, as well as for several other reasons. Dare I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, for the love of God, to help her to accept this decision.

I will give some money to the three sisters<sup>3</sup> who will leave soon for Angers. The administrators came to tell us how they proposed to handle the expenses of their trip.

It is certainly true, Monsieur, that Sister Henriette<sup>4</sup> is in the frame of mind you thought she was. Please God it will last for a long time. I have always perceived strength in the midst of her weakness.

I am delighted that the good Mademoiselle Marie Gonain<sup>5</sup> is practicing charity in the manner she so loves, and that the hospital of Château-Gontier is being staffed by those good young women who acquit themselves so well in the service of the sick. The fear of losing poor Sister Jeanne<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Jeanne Lepintre, Sister Servant at Nantes, came to Angers to spend a few days with Henriette Gesseume.

2. Marguerite Moreau, see Letter 278.

3. Marie Donion, Michelle and Jeanne-Marie Ceintereau.

4. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

5. Marie Gonain, see Letter 325.

6. Jeanne had problems adapting to community life. The Council of June 1647 spoke of her dismissal (Coste XIII, 644). In 1649, it was still in question, see Letter 481. Louise de Marillac must have made a mistake on her place of origin. Jeanne was from Loudun, not from Chinon, see Letter 145.

causes us to hesitate about placing her as Monsieur Le Mercier<sup>1</sup> suggests. Perhaps the example of the sisters we will be sending will benefit those who need encouragement.

I thank you very humbly, Monsieur, for persuading our sisters not to go to Sainte-Marie. You know why we are opposed to it. You also know, Monsieur, that the only reasons are those which have to do with our sisters, whom I always take the liberty of confiding to your direction because we need your continued charity toward them.

I am very much afraid that Sister Cécile<sup>2</sup> takes too many liberties in her dealings with the Reverend Bishop of Angers. In the name of God, Monsieur, be so good as to advise her how to conduct herself in these matters. It is so easy to raise oneself above one's rightful place without even noticing it, that I consider it a great charity to point this out to her. I trust in your goodness to do this and to honor me by believing that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

**L.331 - FOR SISTER JULIENNE (LORET)**

*at Chars*

(October 1651)

My very dear Sister,

The goodness of your heart is too great for its effects to be bad. I heartily thank you for the news you send us regularly. Monsieur Portail met your good curate here and immediately promised him a place for the retreat although the number of participants is already quite large.

I praise God with all my heart for your good health. I am delighted with the beautiful, delicious fruit, but be sure, my dear Sister, that you are not depriving your poor of anything. Always look at their needs so that you can give them the best you have, because it belongs to them. I am convinced, my dear Sister, that you do not fail in this.

I do not know whether I told you that my son seems to have completely recovered. However, he has not gone out as yet, and he does not eat meat at supper. I beg you and Sister Philippe,<sup>3</sup> whom I encourage to remain cheerful and modest, to thank God for me. I ask both of you, my dear

1. Monsieur Le Mercier, priest and the sisters' confessor.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108. On September 19, 1651, the administrators wrote Louise de Marillac in order to request Cécile's departure because she listened to the Bishop more than to them.

3. Philippe Bailly, see Letter 339.

Sisters, to consider me in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Greetings from all our sisters, as well as from our Reverend Fathers, who are very happy to have news of you.

**L.332 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

November (1651)

My very dear Sister,

So, your trip<sup>1</sup> was beneficial! I praise God with all my heart for this. It seems to me that Sister Henriette returned home delighted with everything. You did not mention it.

I did not fail to show your letter to Monsieur Vincent, as you requested. He still has it, so, perhaps, I will not respond to everything you asked me, my very dear Sister, because I cannot remember the entire contents of your letter just now. However, do not hesitate, my dear Sister, to ask me again about anything that requires an answer.

I would ask you, my dear Sister, to take note of the dispositions and capabilities of all the sisters in your little family, and to tell me which of them you think would most suitably replace Sister Anne<sup>2</sup> at Hennebont. At first, I thought that she could return, but now I realize that she must not. Are you satisfied with her? Please let me know what duty you have given her, and your opinion of her. I would also like very much to know, my dear Sister, if your return from Angers makes you look a bit more favorably upon your stay in Nantes, where God has bestowed so many blessings upon all of you albeit amidst thorns and crosses.

Please send me the names and birthplaces of all our sisters. Are there not ten of you now, with Sister Anne there? Have the administrators raised any objections?

Please extend my greetings to Sister Henriette<sup>3</sup> and tell her that I was very pleased with her letter. I hope that she will continue to send us news of herself from time to time. I cannot write to her this time. It seems to me that it has been a long time since we have heard from Sister Marthe.<sup>4</sup> I am anxious to have news of her and to know if she is still very strong

1. Jeanne Lepintre and Henriette Gesseume went to spend a few days in Angers.

2. Anne Hardemont, who was then in Nantes.

3. Henriette Gesseume, to whom Monsieur Vincent wrote to tell her to go to Hennebont as Sister Servant (Coste IV, 240).

4. Marthe Dauteuil, see Letter 165.

and courageous. I would especially like to know if all our sisters are very faithful to their vocation. I desire this with all my heart. I hope that you will remember us in your prayers because of the close bond of His love by which Our Lord unites us for all eternity and in which I am, your very humble and most obedient sister and servant.

**L.405 - (TO SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST)**

*at Angers<sup>1</sup>*

(c. 1651)

My very dear Sister,

Truly I found the time exceedingly long before receiving news of your dear selves. I praise God with all my heart that only your holy duty kept you from writing. May God's most holy love always make it meritorious for you, and may He continue to bestow His graces on all our sisters so as to keep them in the state you described to me. I embrace all of them tenderly, and urge them to think often of eternity so that the thought of the roses to come may console them amidst the thorns. We must strive to acquire spiritual balance and inner peace in all the circumstances that may arise.

This seems very difficult, but we can make use of two or three means that will be of great help. Firstly, my dear Sisters, we must develop the habit of accepting all our little contradictions as coming from the hand of God, who is our Father and who knows well what is good for us. Another means is to reflect that the sadness we are experiencing will not last forever, and that after a few hours, we will be in a different frame of mind from the one in which we now find ourselves. A third means to preserve peace in the midst of our little trials is to recall that God knows our present state, and that if we love Him for Himself and strive to do His holy will, the very things that now sadden us will in truth be a source of great consolation for us one day. Let us therefore concentrate all our efforts on doing good so as to please God. The lack of exterior help from creatures will enable us to advance in the perfection of holy love.

Do you know, my very dear Sisters, what Our Lord does for a soul deprived of all consolation and help from creatures but courageous and blessed enough to use this trial in the way I have described? He delights in becoming the cherished guide of such souls. Even if they do not feel this help, they can rest assured that God will not permit them to do

1. Letter recopied by Marguerite Chétif, Angers Series. The administrators requested Cécile Angiboust's departure by the letter dated September 19, 1651.

anything displeasing to Him. This should be the goal of all our desires.

Please pray for all our sisters and for me who am in Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble (sister and servant).

#### L.494 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

The 12th (November 1651)

Monsieur,

I cannot describe how consoled I was to receive your dear letter. I had thought that I no longer deserved such an honor and that your important work absorbed all your time. I beg God, Monsieur, to keep you well in the midst of your trials, and I hope that we may be blessed with another visit from you.

I suspected that our sisters were becoming the object of a vicious attack. Monsieur Leheurt<sup>1</sup> went to the trouble of coming to see us. He was highly critical of the sisters, particularly of Sister Cécile.<sup>2</sup> He said that they were involved in complaints lodged against the administration; that they cross-examined penitents leaving the confessional and many other things of this nature.

I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, if you do not know the basis of these complaints, to be good enough to find out so that we may know the truth in the matter. I would also ask you, Monsieur, in your charity, to determine which of our sisters<sup>3</sup> seems most gifted with aptitude for direction so that we can name her assistant to the Sister Servant, if God is pleased to restore her to health. She may even be asked to replace her for a time should Monsieur Vincent see fit to remove her from office for a while, in order to relieve her, and also to test her virtue a bit.

I look forward to your arrival to learn your opinion in this matter, which I beg you to commend to Our Lord, in whose love I am, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

P.S. I most humbly beg you to pray for the very important matter of the withdrawal of our sisters from Nantes. Monsieur Vincent has just about decided to do this soon. If I have the honor of seeing you, I will give you the reasons for this decision. Permit me, Monsieur, to ask to be remembered in your prayers and holy Masses.

---

1. Monsieur Leheurt, hospital administrator.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

3. It was Elisabeth Brocard who was named Assistant, see Letter 237.

**L.333 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

Feast of Saint Catherine [1651]

My Most Honored Father,

I have found no document pertaining to the foundation.<sup>1</sup> However, I recall that one day<sup>2</sup> you read to us the petition you had presented to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris. You followed this with a reading of our Rule. Thinking that the text should remain with us, I asked you for it. I believe that the reason we never received it was because there were still modifications to be made in it.<sup>3</sup>

My misery and my awareness of the obstacles I place in the path of grace for this Company have often led me to think that, in order to establish it on a firm foundation, it would be desirable for someone to replace me. My successor, by the example of her virtue and of her fidelity to the Rules, would be able to assist all the Daughters of Charity to form good habits. Because this is lacking at the present time, it has often seemed to me that Providence has been deferring its establishment.

There are other good reasons that have frequently caused me to doubt that God wanted its establishment, or to believe that He was only permitting it to continue until such time as it would destroy itself by particular disorders. The reasons are first, the premature deaths of so many good subjects who would have been well able to sustain it; second, the fear that the Daughters of Charity, seeing themselves securely established, might rise above their appropriate position and become smug in the fulfillment of their duties. A third or fourth reason is the experience of already having three or four sisters leave to get married. Obviously they had been harboring these thoughts while in the Company, thoughts which are strong temptations to impurity. If allowed to persist, this crime would completely destroy the Company, which must be established with the aim of honoring Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, who are the very personification of purity. And finally, there are the individual faults of our sisters, their little growth in holiness, and above all, their lack of mortification of the senses and passions.

But there are facts that lead me to believe that God wills its establishment. These are the intrinsic goodness of the work itself; the blessings which He in His mercy has bestowed upon it until now; the

---

1. Founding of the Company.

2. May 30, 1647 (Coste IX, 324).

3. The Act of Establishment, approved in 1646 (see notes of 1646) mentioned that the Daughters of Charity were under the jurisdiction of the Bishops. Louise de Marillac insisted that the Company depend on the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, see Letters 130d and 199.



guidance of Divine Providence in the entire formulation; the freedom Superiors have to rid the Company of subjects who might spoil it, and likewise, the freedom granted each individual to withdraw.

Another reason to believe that God wills the establishment of the Company is that, since the basic ownership of its temporal goods concerns another work, in the future it might be desired or reasons might be found to propose its general suppression, and, thus, the glory God perhaps wished to draw from it would end sooner than He intended if the Company had been faithful to Him.

The strongest reason for believing that the establishment is essential is that, if it is not effected by the Founder God made use of to begin the work, it cannot be assumed that his successors would ever dare to undertake it. I beg God in His goodness to continue to guide and to shed His light upon His work, to eliminate any obstacles remaining in it, and to manifest His will concerning the thoughts of those who wish to be associated with it.

I very humbly beg your pardon for having gone on too long. Enclosed is the first Rule which is, I believe, the one presented to the Most Reverend Archbishop. If it is not the one, it is, at least, a copy. It is my great shame that I do not practice it or deserve to call myself, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

P.S. I believe that Brother Ducourneau will be able to find a copy, or the original of the petition that was presented, as well as the Act of Establishment which, it seems to me, was never in our possession.

### **L.269 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

December 2 (1651)

Monsieur,

If I did not know that the world usually persecutes those who do not follow its maxims, I would be astounded to see how it dares to fabricate such black malice as that which leads it to calumniate persons interested only in furthering the glory of God in all things. God, in His mercy, gives you the grace, Monsieur, to make good use of the calumnies of the period. I can assure you that I had not heard this mentioned. On the contrary, I was told that everything possible had been done to have a bishop<sup>1</sup> according to the will of God; and this was said openly and in the presence

1. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld, see Letter 521. His frequent visits to the hospital were criticized.

of Monsieur Vincent, that when evil is spoken against someone and no proof or source can be cited, then it is pure calumny. It seems to me, Monsieur, that all this is very different from what is circulating in Angers.

Truly, I think that the great troubles and labor that our sisters have because of their weakness could, to some degree, prevent their having a well-regulated interior life. But, I believe, Monsieur, that if they acquire the habit of performing all their actions for God, they could be distracted from too much introspection which is, in my opinion, the cause of their misunderstanding and restlessness.

We are always most grateful to you, Monsieur, for the care your Charity takes of them. This obliges us to implore Divine Love to be your eternal recompense. I am in this same love, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble daughter and servant.

### L.335 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Feast of Saint Thomas [1651]

My Most Honored Father,

I could not let this day go without reminding your Charity that 26 years ago today Providence placed me in the state of earthly widowhood and gave me the grace of desiring to be united to God for time and for eternity. Please give me your blessing on this anniversary, and in your charity, offer me once again to His goodness. If I were not so unfaithful to my guardian angel, he would surely have inspired you to do so this morning.

I am returning to you the letter from the chaplain in Nantes. I do not think that I am wrong in surmising that some people there believe that it would be well for us to recall Sister Jeanne.<sup>1</sup> Would you consider, my Most Honored Father, sending her to Saint-Malo? Please excuse me for expressing my thoughts so readily. I am enclosing the letter of our dear Sister Jeanne and the one from Sister Henriette<sup>2</sup> who, as you will see, is quite willing to go to Hennebont.

I do not know if your Charity had the opportunity to see the letter from the Pastor of Nanteuil. I am enclosing it also. I believe he is angry because Madame de Schomberg,<sup>3</sup> the wife of the Field-Marshal, is listening to our sisters. At present, I believe they are opposed to his idea

---

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76. Monsieur Vincent wrote to her in August 1651 (Coste IV, 240).

3. Madame de Schomberg, see Letter 263.

of placing a beggar as watchman at the Hôtel-Dieu because they are afraid that the disorders that have been going on for a long time will continue. I am enclosing the letter from the sisters on this matter. I will forward it to Madame de Schomberg, the wife of the Field-Marshal, if your Charity judges this appropriate.

For the love of God, my Most Honored Father, allow me to make my little review to you before Christmas— either Friday, Saturday or Sunday (which is Christmas eve), at a time convenient for you.

We have Mademoiselle Guérin here with us. She used to be your neighbor at the Bons-Enfants. Within the past month she has lost two of her own children. They were of great promise and virtue. One young man was a professed religious at Saint-Geneviève; the other was a member of Parliament. She would like very much to have the honor of seeing you. You know that she is a person who will take no more of your time than your Charity is able to give her. Although unworthy, I remain, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

P.S. The young man who came from Nantes asked me to remember him to your Charity. I forgot to extend to you the very humble greetings of Monsieur and Madame de Liancourt<sup>1</sup> when they arrived from La Roche-Guyon.

**L.336 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE (LORET)<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

(December 1651)

My very dear Sister,

I am greatly surprised to hear that you have not received any news from us. I am, however, the one who should complain. I have already written twice asking you to find out from Sister Philippe<sup>3</sup> what she bought from the grocer when she was at Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs, and how much she owes him because he is pressing us for payment.

I am very much mistaken if we have not sent you drugs to make ointment, but I am sending more. I beg you, my dear Sister, to let me

1. Madame de Liancourt, see Letter 4.

2. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.

3. Philippe Bailly of Vitry-le-François. In 1647, she was in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, then at the parish of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs. She was sent to Chars for approximately two years in 1651. She was then at the Motherhouse and signed the Act of Establishment of the Company in 1655. She was named Bursar in 1660.

know as soon as possible what you have learned from Sister Philippe. I reproached her in my last letter for not writing to me. Please tell her that I only want to hear how she is. I hope for more news from both of you, in keeping with what you have led me to expect.

I beg Our Lord to be your strength and consolation and to be good to you at the Crib. I am in His most holy love, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.337 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE AGNÈS<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital of Saint-Jean  
l'Évangéliste at Angers*

December 30 (1651)

My very dear Sister,

I am sorry for not informing you sooner of Sister Marguerite's<sup>2</sup> safe arrival. The Christmas season was partly the cause, as were my slight ailments. She was careful to tell me all that you wanted her to say. May the remembrance you have of her help you to bear with one another for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who teaches us to practice this virtue as a sign that we belong to Him.

I beg you, therefore, not to form hasty opinions about our newly arrived sisters.<sup>3</sup> You are well aware that changes are always difficult, and that it takes time to learn new ways of serving the poor skillfully and well. All that I can say to you about them is that they are all filled with good will, and that they were quite successful on their former missions.

However, you must not conclude, my dear Sister, that, because you have repeated something a dozen times, it is enough. You know that our memories are not always adequate. So, be patient, my dear Sister, not only with these sisters but with everyone in general. Practice great gentleness, condescension and discretion. Above all, show great reserve in expressing your feelings, and do not reveal what you know about one sister to another. Sister Servants must die to themselves, if they are to fulfill their duties well.

If we realized our obligations, oh, how we would dread the weight of the responsibilities placed upon us. The fear we ought to have of being unable to accomplish anything of ourselves should cause us to work for

1. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

2. Marguerite Moreau, see Letter 278.

3. The three sisters who arrived at the beginning of November: Marie Donion, Michelle and Jeanne-Marie.

others, so that the patience they must practice toward us because of our weakness, might be useful for their salvation and God's glory. We will be eternally humbled, as we deserve, if we have not made use of our position according to the designs of God.

I am not speaking in this way, my dear Sister, because of any knowledge I have of you in particular. Rather, I am referring to all those who hold positions of authority, and to myself more than to anyone else because I have great reason to be afraid. Let us greatly humble ourselves and place ourselves well below everyone else so as to try to be safe. Above all, let us willingly give ourselves to God to accept all the humiliations our pride must endure, if we are to avoid being lost.

Please tell the older sisters of your house that I urge them to renew their courage and to be careful to put into practice one of the principal points of our Rule, which is to avoid confiding their trials to one another or conversing idly about the dispositions of other sisters. As for the confessor, in the name of God, my very dear Sisters, be open to whatever Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux advises.

Always be respectful toward the Bishop of Angers.<sup>1</sup> Do not abuse the honor he pays you by becoming too familiar in your dealings with him. Admire his humility and marvel that God has chosen you to make you what you are and to prepare you to pay the price for the honor you do not deserve and which you receive, through the humiliations you will encounter in the duty in which you will be placed when God, in His mercy, removes you from the one in which you now are.

Forgive me, my dear Sister, if I communicate to you the fraternal corrections which God prompts me to give. My cordial affection for you causes me to speak this way.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of the good Madame de Lamoignon<sup>2</sup> whom God called from this world last night, that she may enjoy the glory which the Son of God merited as a reward for her three outstanding virtues of holy simplicity, profound humility and unbounded charity and generosity. After having prayed for her, as the Church asks us to do, let us pray for ourselves that she may obtain for us, from the divine goodness, these three virtues, for the glory of God. Please inform Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux and Monsieur Ratier of her death. Greet them for me and express my apologies for not taking this opportunity to write to them.

Good day, my dear Sisters. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

---

1. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld, see Letter 521.

2. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

**L.281 - TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST AT SAINT-DENIS**

Thursday evening (c. 1651)

My very dear Sister,

As soon as you receive this letter, please have Sister Jeanne leave to come here. This is an order from Monsieur Vincent, so that is why I urge you to do so without delay. God willing, I will send you another sister. I beg Him to keep you in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.287B - (TO SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST)**

*at Angers*<sup>1</sup>

(c. 1651)

My very dear Sister,

For your retreat, reflect that God permits that in order to make you more open. Do we want to be mercenaries and wait until circumstances force us to be faithful to God? Do we not know what God asks of us?

In reality, do we not know that He wants us to distrust and humble ourselves, to be very supportive of one another, to do and say whatever we believe will please others, to be careful not to anger any of our sisters, and to overcome ourselves so as not to reveal our feelings when they are contrary to those of others.

Since we know that all these practices are pleasing to our good God, let us undertake them for His holy love.

**L.357 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT<sup>2</sup>**

(c. 1651)

When mention is made of permissions obtained from the Sister Assistant, would it not be necessary to add, "always in the absence of

- 
1. Letter recopied by Marguerite Chétif, Angers Series.
  2. Louise de Marillac expressed her reflections on the Rule which was in the process of being drawn up.

the Directress?" Is the word "Directress" appropriate? Would it not be better to have the required readings once a week instead of once a month?

It would seem essential that the sisters in the parishes not visit one another except in the case of illness. Should an article be drawn up to this effect?

These are the things I have noticed, my Most Honored Father. However, in the name of God, pay no attention to either my notes or my remarks. Instead, tell us to do what you believe God is asking of us. Please add the maxims and instructions which will encourage us and keep us faithful and exact in the observance of all the points of our Rule because, it seems to me, that, as we are, we do not pay sufficient attention to our obligations because we do not look upon them as such.

Please give your blessing to all your poor daughters and ask God, for their servant, the mercy she needs to be truly, my Most Honored Father, your poor daughter and most grateful servant.

## 1652

*Renewed outbreak of the troubles of the Fronde, defeat of Condé at the gates of Paris.*

*Serious illness of Louise de Marillac.*

*Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Brienne and Varize.*

*Sending of the first Daughters of Charity to Warsaw (Poland).*

### L.339 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chars*

January 7, 1652

My very dear Sister,

Heartfelt thanks for your dear New Year's gifts which I did not distribute to the sisters, thinking they were your pictures from past years because they bore the same writing. This would have been out of place. As for your delicious cakes, the community will think of you while enjoying them. The "Little Sister"<sup>2</sup> does not yet have enough teeth to eat any.

---

1. Name given to the Superioress General in official documents.

2. Louise-Renée, Louise de Marillac's granddaughter, was not yet three months old.